



Mid-Cities Commodore Club

Dallas/Ft. Worth

October 1989

MCCC NEWS

Volume 7 Issue 10

METCOM*89

- X FREE ADMISSION.
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- X SEE INSIDE FOR MORE DETAILS.

PowerPacker

Amiga Software Review by Johnny C. Kitchens
Mid-Cities Commodore Club

I've just started using a program that has me really excited. Imagine a shareware program that saves you money. The program is called *PowerPacker* by Power Peak. Within minutes of using the program I was hooked on its abilities.

PowerPacker can be called a program cruncher. It squeezes the program down to a smaller size, similar to arc, zoo, or pak, but when you run the program it expands right away. Your only indication that this is happening is a flash of colors which you have control over by selecting the screen or pointer color flashing.

PowerPacker's performance is, to say the least, fantastic. I decided to use my WorkBench disk as a test disk since I wanted more space for more programs. The disk had about 7k of space left. After using *PowerPacker* I had 91k of space left on the disk. I wasn't able to use *PowerPacker* on every file on the disk. Less than 10% of the files would respond to *PowerPacker* in command file mode. A data file mode is provided for other files. I used command for this disk only. 91k might not sound like a great deal to some, but it was enough. After installing the programs I wanted on the disk in my new space, I still have 57k left. Room for more goodies!

As I ran *PowerPacker* on the various files each gave a different amount of compression ranging from 31% to 58%. *PowerPacker* allows control over the amount of compression you can get. It comes in five levels ranging from fast to best. For the impatient the fast is quick and saves a little space. Best is slow but you get all the compression possible. I used best exclusively for my disk so I could get maximum space savings. I decided to do a comparison of all five efficiency levels and made a discovery on my own. I used a file that was 9056 bytes long for the test. Here's what I got.

Efficiency Setting	New Size	Percent Saved	Packing Time
Fast	5560	39%	12 sec
Mediocre	5480	40%	21 sec
Good	5428	41%	58 sec
Very Good	5320	42%	69 sec
Best	5340	42%	79 sec

What? Yes, "best" is bigger and it took 10 seconds longer to do it. I tried a different file and "best" did get it smaller than "very good". Something to think about. At least you can decrunch the file if needed, or just try a different level and compare. One

file I did that was 116k took 6.5 minutes. It was worth the wait. A decrease of 58% was achieved -- a worthwhile decrease in any disk.

PowerPacker has a wide array of controls which allow you to manipulate hunks, repack files packed by other crunchers, and even script control. You are allowed to set the signaling mode to let you know that it is working while you work on something else or just watch on. You may choose between screen flashing, which can be a little annoying, or LED flashing, which

"It squeezes the program down to a smaller size, similar to arc, zoo, or pak, but when you run the program it expands right away."

flashes the power LED during the crunching operation. If you are multitasking, the LED is the way to go.

As I pointed out, this program is shareware and has an address to which you should send \$10.00 to help pay for for the author's work. The address is:

Nico Francois
Corbielaan 13
3060 Bertem Belgium

If you would like an extra bit of space on a particular disk, *PowerPacker* is the easy way without deleting something you may need later.

Editor's Note:

PowerPacker is currently available both on the MCCC BBS and from the library. On the BBS, you can find it by doing a pattern search for "Pack". To get a copy from the library, ask the chapter librarian for the disk number.



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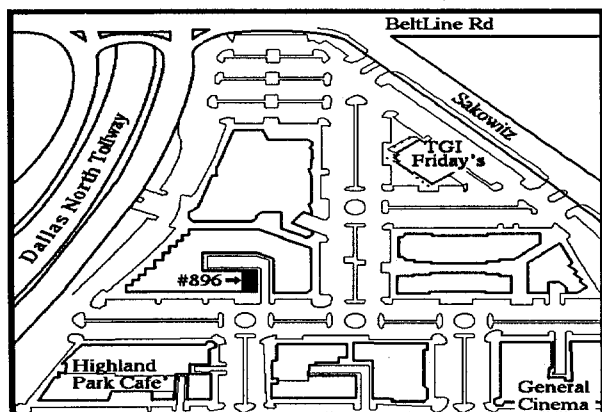
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New Stuff I Just Got

Amiga Software Reviews by Bill Raecke

Mid-Cities Commodore Club

Ballistix by Psygnosis

Ballistix is not a particularly new game. It's been on the market for at least four or five months now. I'm writing about it now for two reasons. The first one is that, although I bought the game about four months ago, I just got around to opening it. That's a habit of mine -- I buy a game when I see it -- open it when I have the chance. What with the newsletter and BBS to keep me busy as well as my other interests on the Amiga, new software sometimes takes a while to get to. I wind up with my own private store of software still wrapped in plastic waiting to be used for the first time.

The second reason is that the game is good enough to warrant mentioning even though it's not hot off the presses any more.

Ballistix is another game by Psygnosis, the same company that produced *Blood Money* which I reviewed here in the August issue. What distinguishes *Ballistix* is not the remarkable graphics as it was in *Blood Money*, but the interesting and unique game play. I have not seen another game like it.

It's kind of a cross between pinball, pool, and hockey. There is a game field rather like a hockey court -- with a goal at each end. The object of the game is to hit the ball into the opponent's goal. That's the hockey part. To make the game more interesting, you hit the ball with other balls which emanate from the end of an arrow which you control with the joystick. Position the arrow where you want it, press the joystick button, and balls will shoot in the direction in which the arrow is pointing -- hopefully toward the game ball and the opponent's goal. When a ball hits another ball, however, directions become difficult and the ricochet action is wild. There is no time to carefully plan shots as there is in pool. The pinball part of the game? That comes from the obstacles that are placed in the playing field. There are bumpers from which balls will rebound just as they would in a pinball game. There are troughs, magnets, hyperspace tunnels. There are acid pools which will dissolve the game ball. There are red arrows which cause the game ball to travel in the direction of the arrow at very high speeds when it passes over the arrow. There are splitters. If you hit a splitter, sixteen balls are shot out confusing game play and sometimes knocking the game ball in undesirable directions. Scoring can be changed by hitting the numbers which appear on the field from time to time. A special bonus can be earned by collecting all the letters of the word "Ricochet" as they appear on the game field.

The game can be played by one or two players.

In the two player mode, there are two arrows on the screen. Each player tries to get the game ball into the opponent's goal. In the one player mode there is no computer controlled opponent -- your opponent is gravity. The field is tilted. If the game ball falls through the goal at the bottom of the screen, the computer has just scored a point. It's fun and challenging either way you play it.

The graphics are very well done with a dark, slightly demonic, fantasy feel to them. Sound effects are excellent. If you don't have it, and if my description sounds at all appealing, I recommend that you rush down to the nearest store and buy it. As for me, I think I may start buying everything made by Psygnosis.

RawCopy v1.3e by Micro Systems International

I've already covered this program twice, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time covering the same ground again. In my previous reviews I made my opinion clear that the purchase of *RawCopy* was probably the worst software investment I had ever made. Previous releases took forever to make copies that didn't work. Against my better judgement, I recently sent Micro Systems International twelve dollars for an upgrade. I am now happy to report that the program now works -- at least to some extent.

One of my complaints was that there was no list provided with the software showing what titles it would copy. Such a list is now provided. Another of my complaints is that *RawCopy* was, itself, copy protected and that it would not make copies of itself. *RawCopy* is no longer copy protected at all.

I still cannot recommend the program without reservation. The list of titles which it will copy only numbers 201 -- and that includes several titles which are listed more than once because they have multiple protection schemes. That is an extremely small list considering the huge number of titles currently available for the Amiga. On the plus side, however, there are several titles which it can copy that other programs cannot.

I guess what it boils down to is this. If there is a title that you need to back up and if it is on *RawCopy*'s list, you may want to consider purchasing it. It no longer falls into the category of programs to be avoided like the plague. If you are in need of a general purpose backup utility however, you would still be better off with *Project-D* or with *NIB* (which is available in the club library or on the BBS).



Amiga Shareware

A Reminder from Ned Kelly
MCCC Vice President

For those members of the Amiga By-The-Loop or Amiga Central chapters, you may have seen the Mason jar on the treasurer's table and not really known what it was about. About six months ago the officers of the two chapters decided that the club needed to acknowledge and support the many fine public domain and shareware programs out there. We took a vote at Amiga By-The-Loop for a popular public domain program, put the name of the winner on a Mason jar, and encouraged members of both chapters to drop in a dollar or two.

On June 3, 1989, the MCCC sent a check for \$50 to the author of PKAX, a very fast unarcng utility. Amiga Central selected the next piece of software, and on July 10, 1989, the MCCC sent a check for \$50 to the author of VirusX, the wonderful virus detection program. Amiga By-The-Loop chose next, and on September 16, 1989, the MCCC sent a check for \$50 to the author of SuperView, the picture display program.

We should all be proud of the support we have given so far to these authors, and hopefully this will encourage them and others to keep up the good work. So when you are at an Amiga meeting and asked for nominations, speak out about your favorite piece of public domain software, but most of all, please do not overlook that Mason jar.

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The Cocoon

A Bit of Reality from Okley Moss
MCCC BBS Coordinator

There's a story attributed to Henry Miller, the writer, about a little boy in India who walks up to a guru -- an Indian wise man -- who is sitting and looking at something in his hand. The little boy goes up and looks at it. He doesn't quite understand what it is, so he says to the guru, "What is that?"

"It's a cocoon," the guru tells him. "Inside the cocoon is a butterfly. Soon the cocoon is going to split, and the butterfly will come out."

"Could I have it?" asks the little boy.

"Yes," says the guru, "but you must promise me that, when the cocoon splits and the butterfly starts to come out and he is beating his wings to get out of the cocoon, you won't help him. Don't help the butterfly by breaking the cocoon apart. Let him do it by himself."

The little boy promised, took the cocoon, went home with it, and then sat and watched it. Finally he saw it begin to vibrate and move and quiver, and finally the cocoon split. Inside was a beautiful, damp butterfly, frantically beating its wings against the cocoon, trying to get out and not seeming to be able to do it.

The little boy desperately wanted to help. Finally he gave in and disobeyed the guru's orders. He pushed the two halves of the cocoon apart, and the butterfly sprang out. But, as soon as it got up into the air, it fell down to the ground and was killed. The little boy picked up the dead butterfly and in tears went back to the guru and showed it to him.

"You see, little boy," the guru said, "you pushed open the cocoon, didn't you?"

"Yes," said the little boy, "I did."

And the guru said, "You don't understand. You didn't see what you were doing. When the butterfly comes out of the cocoon, the only way he can strengthen his wings is by beating them against the cocoon. It beats against the cocoon so its muscles will grow. When you helped it the way you did, you prevented it from getting strong. That's why the butterfly fell to the ground and was killed."

It's a story every parent should remember, every teacher should remember, every administrator should remember. Handing a child everything he needs, fulfilling his every desire, all these things tend to weaken the muscles he should be developing on his own so when the time comes for him to think, to fly, to take responsibility, he will, for he must to be a successful adult.



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AT METCOM

Presentations:

10:30-11:30

A SPECIAL TALK BY JAY MINER

11:30-12:30

HAM/Packet Radio on the C-64 by Curtis Crago, Sr.

12:30-2:00

CAN-DO - The amazing new product by
Inovatronics, Inc.

2:00-2:30

Amiga Total Control Diet for the Home
by Sylvester Lee

2:30-4:30

Computer Art by Marlyn Coughran

4:30-5:00

Doorprizes

Doorprizes will include:

Microbotics Hardframe DMA Hard Drive Controller

5 1-week trial subscriptions to Startext

(The above lists are as of September 27. They are subject to change.)

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For generous assistance in advertising

and to:

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For the donation of a Hardframe for our doorprize

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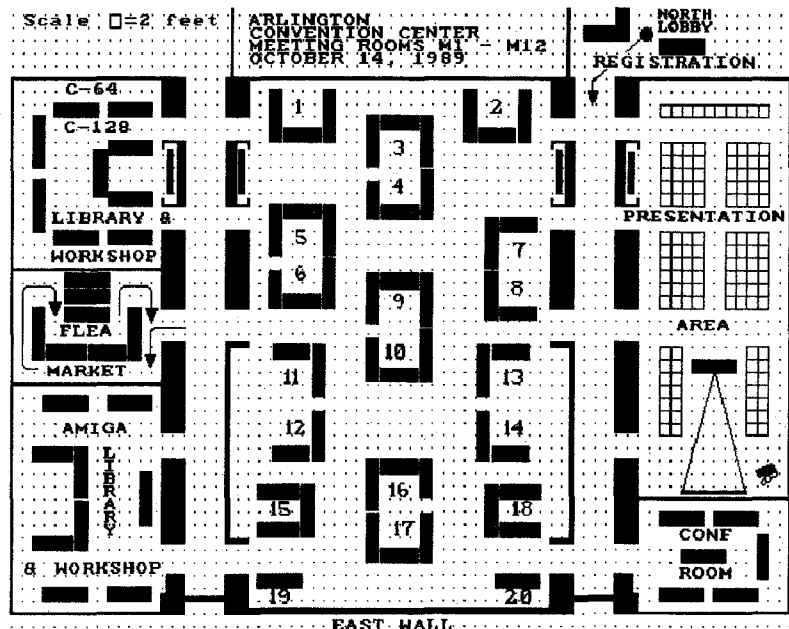
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Disk ID's

C-64/C-128 Information by Max Abelman
From the Newsletter of the Colorado Commodore Club

At a recent meeting, reference was made to the need to initialize the 1541 and 1571 disk drives when a new disk is inserted that has the same ID as the last one used. The reason stated was that DOS does not recognize that a new disk is inserted. It will use the previous Block Allocation Map if you save new data and overwrite data already on the disk. This is not true, as I will attempt to prove.

The reason for the confusion is that the original CBM drives, 2040 and 3040, used DOS 1.x which only read the BAM if the initialize command was given and did not check the disk ID against sector header ID for read/writes. When the 4040 drive version DID check the ID whenever a disk command was given (except for BACKUP, COLLECT, HEADER and RECORD) "Disk error 20, Disk ID Mismatch" was reported if the ID in memory from a previous disk was different from the one found on the header blocks. However, if the previous and the new disks had the same IDs, it would use the previous BAM to write to the disk with disastrous results. BASIC 4 did not even have an initialize command. You were forced to use different IDs to prevent problems. They even suggested HIDING your disks with duplicate IDs made by the backup command.

This all changed when the Micropolis 8050 drive arrived. It had a hardware fix for the problem. Whenever you inserted a new disk, a switch recognized the change and DOS read the BAM. The 1541 and 1571 have a different fix. DOS responds to changes in the write protect light. The next time you

load a program from a newly inserted disk, watch and listen carefully. You will note two disk accesses close together; the first is reading the BAM and the second starts loading your program. This is easily recognized when you load a one block program on a 1541. If you reload that program without switching disks, you will note only one disk access.

Those of you who have installed a switch on the write protect have defeated the duplicate ID safety feature and someday will have a disaster. Also, hackers who are into disk doctor programs know that changing the ID on track 18, sector 0 is only a "cosmetic" change. This ID is displayed when you bring up the directory but the ID in the header for this sector (put there when the disk was formatted) is the one that DOS stores and uses later for comparisons.

Now for the proof: new or header two disks with the same ID. Type and run the following with disk 1 in the drive.

```
10 OPEN 15,8,15
```

```
20 FOR N=1 TO 145: F$=STR$(N): SAVE F$,8
```

```
30 GOSUB 40: PRINT N: NEXT: CLOSE
```

```
40 INPUT#15,E,E$: IF E<20 THEN RETURN
```

```
50 PRINT E;E$: CLOSE15
```

You will get disk error "72, Disk Full" when it attempts to save the 145th program. Both the 1541 and 1571 allow only 144 directory entries in the BAM. Now switch disks without an initialize command. Rerun the program and the second disk BAM will fill. This means that DOS recognized the new disk despite the same ID. Proof? I think so.

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Amiga By-The-Loop

Craig Bird

By the time this newsletter reaches most of you, METCOM*89 will be behind us. (EDITOR'S NOTE: I hope that's not true. If the post office does its job, all newsletters will be delivered by October 12 -- two days before METCOM.) Brent Wood and Ned Kelly gave an overview of the program and indicated that volunteers were still needed in some important areas. Certainly the enthusiasm of the 39+ members and guests at tonight's meeting would carry over into this fantastic event.

Also of importance are the annual elections for chapter officers coming up in December. If you are interested in one of these positions or know of someone willing to contribute their time and talents as an officer, keep him/them in mind. Tonight our contributions for SuperView were sufficient to forward them along, and a survey was taken to choose the next shareware program worthy of our support. ConMan was the favorite and donations will be accepted at our next meeting.

Tonight's meeting featured Brett Hester, an Amiga icon developer, who has put together "Iconvention" -
A

Convention of Icon Inventions" on disk! Actually "Iconvention" is a

collection of many kinds of icons usable for drawers, tools, projects, disks, devices, garbage (for trashcans) and kicks (used for kickstart disk icons.) In addition, "Iconvention" includes such icon manipulators as Icon Maker, IconLab, Iconizer, AddIcon, and a Pointer Animator, all with complete documentation! The icons and their programs are arranged neatly into a series of elevators and stairways, some of which are actually rooms of furniture representing workbench functions and interconnect with each other as if walking through a house.

How many hours have you spent in front of your Amiga looking at so many boring Commodore icons? I confess, two months ago I purchased "Iconvention" at Amazing Computers and have since completely redone my 40MB hard drive with these interesting and very creative icons. This is a graphics computer isn't it?

Next month, Brett is planning completion of his newest compilation titled "Iconstruction". This new disk will feature not only more icons but also the tools with which to create your own icons. If "Iconvention" is an indication of the quality of Brett's work, "Iconstruction" will be very popular.

Amiga Central

Bill Raecke

Our program for September was a demonstration of Iconvention. This is a collection of icons and icon tools put together by Brett Hester and being marketed by him. Since this is the same program as the Amiga By-The-Loop chapter had for September, I will not go into lengthy explanations.

Suffice it to say that Brett's icons are very well done and well worth the paltry sum he is asking for the disk.

For more information, refer to the previous article.

In other news of the evening, we learned that the big Amiga advertising campaign featuring ads directed by George Lucas will begin on October 16. Watch for them - they should be great. Also be on the lookout that night for a special story on Entertainment Tonight on the development of the commercials.

The beta version of AmigaDOS 1.4 has not yet been released. Our hopes for a 1989 release of the upgrade seem to be fading fast. On the plus side, however, Commodore has recently doubled it's Amiga software and hardware development staff. That, coupled with the coming advertising blitz, is a very positive sign.

Arlington/GP

Eddie Allen

The September workshop was sparsely attended this month. If anyone has any need for assistance, this is a perfect time and place to get leisurely assistance.

The Tuesday night meeting was well attended, with two new visitors in attendance. Glen Herring gave a discourse on the nitty gritty happenings of the Commodore Disk Operating System. Unlike other brands of computers, our disk drives have their own "brains", thus we only have to tell it what we want done, rather than how to do it. Our trusty 1571 is also able to read and write several of these other "off brand" format disks. Glen also got down and dirty by tearing apart a diskette, and taking the covers off of his 1571 drive.

Hank Costello, proprietor of Budget Computers, had the cover off of a 1541 which had the RamBoard installed. This board works with Maverick to allow additional archival capabilities of your personal software. He also took us on a tour of a sector editor, giving a real-life example of using the editor to rescue from oblivion a

"splatted" file.

I was allowed to search our library for as many "DOS wedges" as I could find, resulting in three hits. One could not be coaxed out of obscurity. One worked identical to "DOS 5.1", with the capability to be loaded into one of four different memory locations. One combined the "DOS 5.1" usages with the additional capabilities of a disk/file copier, a Micromon type monitor, a sequential file lister/printer, and several more that are too numerous to list here. Hardware sources via different cartridges and chips were discussed.

Next month will see several different printers and their interfaces shown. Terry Turner will have his Star printer and Tymac interface. An Okidata 120 will be there, which others will have to see to appreciate.

The October workshop has been cancelled due to METCOM*89.

Here's hoping to see every one at both METCOM and our next meeting. Cheers.

Fort Worth

Mary Louise Hagemeyer

We had a good meeting, but to those of you who played hooky because of the beautiful weather, a word of warning: election time is coming up, and if you

aren't there, you might find you're our next vice president!

Lorri Culp gave an enthusiastic

review of the Halloween disks from the club library. These are Sidplayer disks with music and pictures suitable for the spooky season.

Jim Marshall brought us part 2 of his DOS discussion, complete with handouts about the DOS wedge and the workings of the 1541 drive. Jim discussed the utility programs on library disks 512, 516, and 524, recommending them for a variety of applications.

I demonstrated a little program for figuring compound interest, computing annual yield from annual rate, etc.

The Hulen library is returning to its winter film schedule, which means that we must change our meeting day back to the second Saturday, which in October is METCOM day. Therefore, FORT WORTH CHAPTER WILL NOT MEET IN OCTOBER. See you at METCOM!

Hurst/Eules/Bedford
Robyn Wilson

Our September 16th meeting proved to be a informative meeting along with a good turnout of current members and new members. We welcome these people to our club and hope that they get all the support and questions answered needed to keep their Commodore system running!

Eldor Luedtke, Jr. handed out some MCCC Surveys several meetings ago. This survey is part of the Club's way to help you. It will be put into a database and eventually you can look up what kind of help you need and you will be referred to someone that can help you with questions. The survey includes questions about the software you have, such as games, education and business, and questions about hardware, such as drives, printers and modems.

Eldor, Jr. is asking that you fill out the information as much as possible and hand

it to him at the next meeting. Again, this is to help you, as a user of Commodore equipment, to better utilize your computer.

The slate of officers for the next year was discussed. In the November newsletter, I will list the nominees so that you will know who will be mentioned at the November meeting. This will give anyone else a chance to see about taking a position as an officer for 1990. At the December meeting the actual voting will take place.

Eldor Luedtke, Sr. discussed some of the highlights of "Maverick", a program used to copy difficult software. It is meant to make a backup of this software just in case you erase your original disk program. Maverick was originally named "Renegade". The Maverick program will automatically switch to the type of computer you are using, whether C64 or C128. It uses a RAM expansion, but doesn't require it. With the expansion you can take an entire disk, put it into RAM memory, insert another disk and all the information goes to that disk. The 1764 RAM expander will hold this information in place. One suggestion that Eldor, Sr. mentioned is that you need to disconnect your printer and any other peripheral that is not going to be used in the copying process. That means to leave only your drive or drives and keyboard active. There may be a continuation of this presentation in more detail at our next meeting.

One other new part of our meeting is to give out door prizes. Eldor, Jr. gave out about five programs relating to both the C64 and C128. I won a program on programming the C64 for games. The other games and utilities given out were just as nice.

The next meeting will be on October 21st at 1:30 p.m. at the Hurst Recreation Center on Mary Drive. This meeting takes place one week later than METCOM '89. It will be worth your while to be at both.



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The Fine Print

The Mid-Cities Commodore Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business. Appropriate and legal use of all types of software is encouraged by this club.

The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Our meetings are open to all. Membership dues are \$20 per year or \$12 for six months and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC ASCII and Graphic bulletin board systems.

Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted by other user groups or individuals who find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

The MCCC News accepts advertising from both members and from commercial establishments. Member advertising is free but must not be of a commercial nature. A commercial ad is defined as one where multiple like items are available for sale to anyone. Members submitting such ads are subject to commercial rates. Commercial rates for camera-ready ads are as follows for a single month or (consecutive three months): full page - \$30 (\$81), half page - \$15 (\$40), quarter page - \$10 (\$27), business card - \$5 (\$13). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy.

The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is the Monday following the third Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail to P.O. Box 813, Bedford, Texas 76095.

Calendar of Events

October 7 MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 AM - N.Richland Hills Community Ctr.
Jack DeTore, 817-275-3762

October 10 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 PM - N.Richland Hills Church of Christ
Brent Wood, 817-246-3707

October 14 METCOM*89
10 'till 5 - Arlington C.
Ned M...

METCOM*89
October 14 - 10 'till 5
Arlington Convention Center

October 17 Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
7:00 PM - Arlington Community Center
Glen Herring, 817-572-0489

October 19 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 PM - Arlington Community Center
Bill Keatley, 817-485-0666

October 21 Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter
1:30 PM - Hurst Recreation Center
Eldor Luedtke, Jr., 817-626-0518

November 4 MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 AM - N.Richland Hills Community Ctr.
Jack DeTore, 817-275-3762

November Newsletter Deadline - October 23

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Sat MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tues Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Sat Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop

2nd Sat Fort Worth Chapter
3rd Tues Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
3rd Thurs Amiga Central Chapter
3rd Sat HEB Chapter

MCCC NEWS

Mid-Cities Commodore Club
P.O. Box 813
Bedford, Texas 76095

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage Paid
Bedford, TX
Permit No. 32

Address Correction Requested

Renew membership--> 90-02

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Time Value - Please Deliver Not Later Than 10/12/89